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ABSTRACT

To improve the educational services to the handicapped and disadvantaged youth of the County, the characteristics of the national population with special needs and the employment opportunities ultimately available to them are reported. The study focuses on appropriate guidelines to develop special programs to increase and improve the educational opportunities for these young people. Conducted in two phases, the first part deals with the educable mentally retarded; the second phase concentrates on the culturally deprived. Data were obtained through interviews, consultations, visits to exemplary programs, conferences, presentations, and literature reviews. Findings and recommendations in each phase of the original study are presented in this abstract, which has been written to be used as a working manual. (MU)

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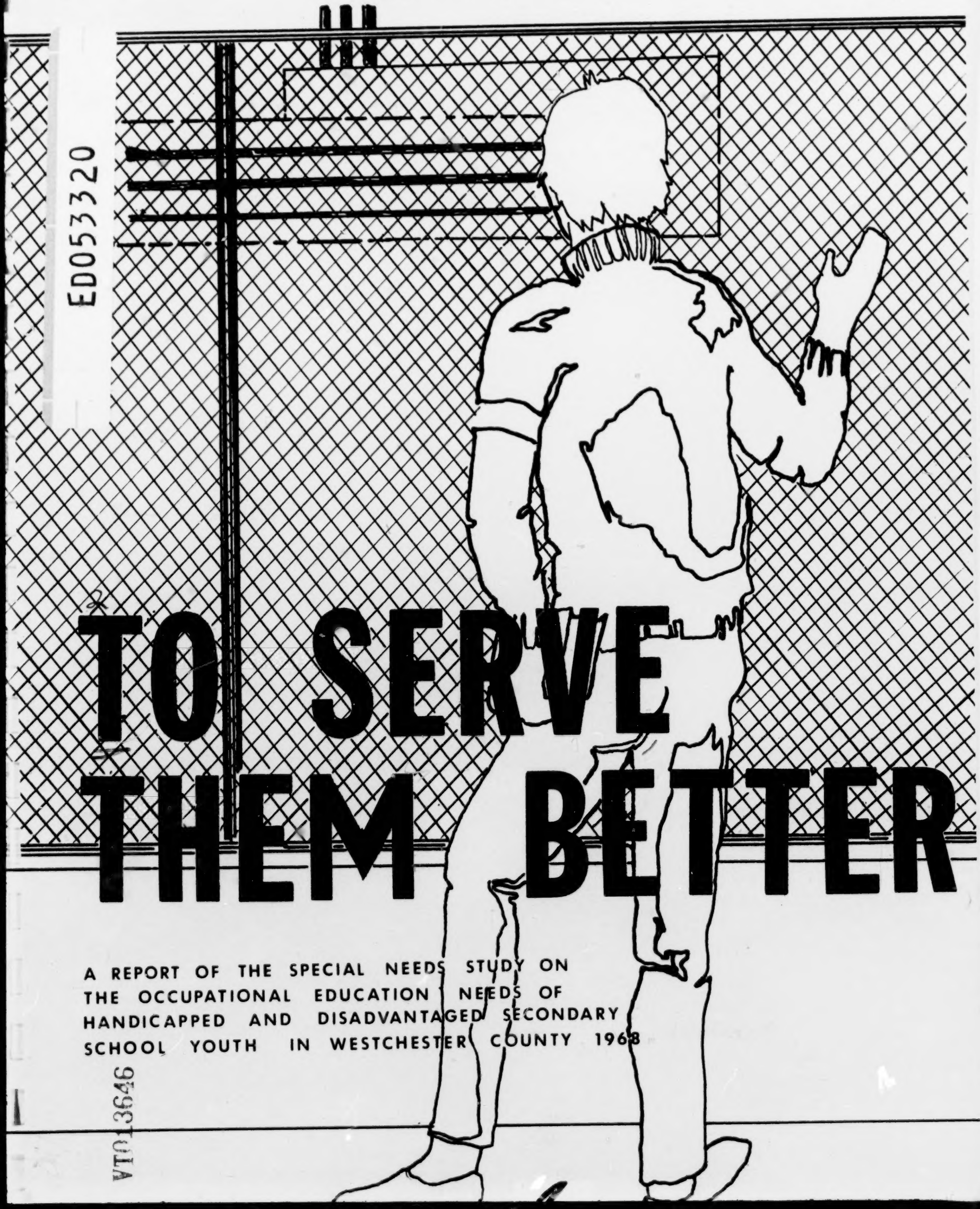
ABSTRACT



TO SERVE THEM BETTER

A REPORT OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS STUDY ON THE OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS OF HANDICAPPED AND DISADVANTAGED SECONDARY SCHOOL YOUTH IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY 1968

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ABSTRACT

of the

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

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The New York State Education Department

under the

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ABSTRACT OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Special Needs Report was written to be used as a working manual to aid the professional in a better understanding of the handicapped and disadvantaged youth; and to serve as a guide to improve educational services for them. It was not intended that the study should evaluate the effectiveness of each district's educational program. Neither was the study designed to initiate research, but rather to accumulate existing research and data in order to create and recommend improved educational programs.

This abstract is to acquaint the general public with some of the findings and recommendations in an abbreviated form.

Although many agencies have dealt with fragments of the problem, no single agency has dealt with the breadth of this study, either geographically or in terms of the various types of handicaps encompassed by this effort. The broad purpose of the study was to determine the characteristics of the population with special needs and the employment opportunities ultimately available to them; and to develop program guidelines to improve and increase the educational opportunities for these young people.

The specific objectives of the study were:

A. To determine the youth population with special needs and the employment opportunities open to them;

B. To enlist the cooperation of the schools, business-industrial community, governmental agencies, and interested groups concerned with occupational education and the problems of the disadvantaged youngster;

C. To learn which programs, throughout the nation, would contribute new insights applicable to the goals of the study;

D. To seek practical approaches to a solution of these problems through contacts with sociologists, economists, educators, et al;

E. To develop curricular innovations to meet these needs;

F. To determine what facility(ies), equipment, and staff are needed to carry out the envisioned program(s);

G. To orient staff members in implementing the plan evolved;

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Introduction (cont.)

H. To establish methods of evaluating the effectiveness of program(s);

I. To estimate the cost of establishing such a program.

The focus of these objectives was set on the young people who are diagnosed as:

A. Educable mentally retarded;

B. Physically or neurologically handicapped;

C. Emotionally disturbed;

D. Culturally deprived;

E. Academically deficient.

Some were found to have multiple disabilities.

Population and Projected Growth

Westchester County's population was 808,000 in 1960. The county's future population, according to the Westchester County Department of Planning, will reach 1,300,000 by 1985. More than half of the people of Westchester live in the county's six cities; one of which, Yonkers, is the fourth largest city in the state.

School Districts

There are more than two hundred (200) public schools in the county, operated by forty-eight (48) individual school districts. The six city school districts and the nineteen independent village districts are each headed by a superintendent of schools. The remaining twenty-three districts are components of either the First Supervisory District of Westchester County (Northern Westchester, BOCES I) or the Second Supervisory District of Westchester County (Southern Westchester, BOCES II), each of which is headed by a District Superintendent of Schools.

The purpose of Boards of Cooperative Educational Services is to provide their component school districts with educational services which can be more economically offered by a larger unit. This regional concept, which exists in other parts of New York State as well, provides many additional services in special areas, such as instructional materials, data processing, and in-service training programs for staff.

Introduction (cont.)

School Enrollment and Projected Growth

The total enrollment in all the public schools of Westchester County was 160,331 in the fall of 1967. Current trends in births and increase in new families indicate that there will be about 200,000 public school children within the next two decades.

HOW WAS THE STUDY CONDUCTED?

The study was conducted in two phases of which Phase I focused on the characteristics and needs of the educable mentally retarded; physically or neurologically impaired; and emotionally disturbed population. Phase II concentrated on the characteristics and needs of the "disadvantaged", culturally deprived, or academically deficient population.

Information was obtained by

1. Interview

The study team utilized the interview technique to obtain basic data and essential information from knowledgeable personnel who have had direct experience in the areas of concern. Interview techniques and instruments varied. Information gained by this method has aided in developing a description of the problem and in obtaining information essential to the development of appropriate recommendations. One hundred and seventy-five interviews were conducted by the study team.

2. Consultations

Consultations were used to obtain the reaction of small groups in an informal setting. The interview and the consultation were the most frequently used methods of getting information.

3. Visits to Exemplary Programs

The selection of programs to visit was made as a result of a review of literature, meetings with consultants, and responses to a national request designed to identify those programs which are having a significant impact on the education of handicapped and disadvantaged youth. These visits permitted an in-depth examination of philosophy and of facilities; and made possible observation of programs and personnel, which would be effective in meeting the problems in the county. An effort was made to interview the innovator and to trace the path of the innovation from creation to operation, which revealed any obstacles to successful implementation.

How the Study Was Conducted (cont.)

4. Conferences

Conferences permitted a formal interchange of ideas between the study team and knowledgeable resources. The study team also participated in several large conferences to obtain the thinking of professionals involved in the decision-making process at the state and national levels.

Small group conferences were most productive, since it elicited reactions from community groups, school personnel, representatives of concerned agencies, representatives of the State Education Department, and those individuals whose experiences were deemed of value. These data have been compiled and have served as 'sounding boards' for the development of specific recommendations.

5. Presentations

Addressing large groups provided an opportunity to disseminate information and to gain reaction, cooperation, interest, and support. Reactions to the ideas were always abundant and valuable.

6. Literature Collection

An in-depth examination of the thinking and direction of the national research community, regarding programs for youth with special needs, was made possible through our collection. Over five hundred (500) studies and reports were evaluated for their suitability to the specific needs of youth in Westchester.

Dr. Wayne Sengstock, Associate Professor of Special Education at Georgia State College, prepared an "Analysis of the Literature", giving a synopsis of the recent research and findings relative to the Phase I population. The Regional Education Center in White Plains and ERIC, Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged, Yeshiva University, were most cooperative in identifying significant research dealing with the educational needs of the disadvantaged.

The study team utilized the total resources available in the county, as well as consultants who aided in data analysis and prepared "position papers" on controversial issues. Their analytical role helped in dealing perceptively with the varied aspects of the study.

Those ideas, concepts, and proposals, which have survived extensive examination, have been developed into recommendations.

ABSTRACT

of the

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

FINDINGS

PHASE I

Abstract - Special Needs Report

FINDINGS - PHASE I

There are physical, mental, and emotional barriers for the handicapped child to cross, in order for him to achieve goals of social, intellectual, emotional, and vocational adjustment. It is the crossing of these barriers which has constituted special education and the need for unique programs.

The following are brief descriptions of the characteristics of youth in special classes:

Mental Retardation (as defined by the American Association on Mental Deficiency) refers to sub-average general intellectual functioning, which originates during the developmental period; and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior. The mentally retarded represent about three to five per cent of school-age children.

The Neurologically Impaired child may be of normal intelligence or retarded. Some may achieve a relatively high level in academic skills (8th grade). Neurological handicap may be found in association with mental retardation, blindness, deafness, and various kinds of physically crippling conditions and emotional disorders.

Emotionally Disturbed children's inner problems contribute to dysfunction in learning patterns. He may be hostile and disruptive, possibly retarded and/or brain injured.

Physical or emotional impairments are not necessarily handicapping to the individual in achieving occupational adequacy. For many, this means full integration with normal children without indications for special education programming. The Department of Labor (1964) estimates that 85% of the mentally retarded are employable if proper training and care is provided for them.

High schools have been forced to try to accommodate mentally retarded pupils in some manner, which include regular class placement, the "track" system, and the special class. No academic adjustment is made in the regular classes, so that failure and dropout are regular concomitants of the unattainable standards of achievement required. Other schools have a three-track system in which an academic curriculum is offered at a slow pace. The goals are still academic. Thus, there has been a superficiality in the traditional approach which has not developed an employment adequacy.

Even when the academic offerings are adjusted to the students' mental levels, the contents of the program do not lead to a goal that is perceived as important by the student. Often when they try to get a job, they meet with new and additional frustrations by not being able to find employment because they have few or no skills to offer the employer.

High School Programs (cont.)

A different kind of school curriculum is necessary to prepare these students for a satisfactory role in society as adults in the world of work. Their school experiences should promote adequate personal and social adjustments and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes which are needed to become successful employees.

Several types of programs are in operation in our nation through which a student may be assigned, during the ninth or tenth year of school, to the cafeteria, library, shop, or office for one or two periods a day to judge his assets and liabilities in several work situations. During the eleventh and twelfth years, the student may be placed in a job outside of the school on a part time basis.

In Baltimore, as an example, the trainee is on the job full time for two weeks and returns to school for two weeks, alternating the job with another student. In Lansing, Michigan, the program permits the student to work full time during his last year in school, provided that he attends night school once a week.

The philosophy of special education should tend toward the development of general skills, attitudes, and habits required by many vocations, rather than training for one specific occupation. The trainee should have several opportunities for various in- and out-of-school placements.

Cooperative Programs

The Division of Vocational and Technical Education of the U. S. Office of Education has said that vocational educators should assist in providing programs for handicapped children in a booklet entitled "The Youth We Haven't Served: A Challenge to Vocational Education."

One of the first states to organize its program in a cooperative venture between special education and vocational rehabilitation was Texas. This model program has been so successful that other states have emulated it.

The mentally retarded were losing jobs more often from failure to adjust socially, than from their inability to perform the tasks to which they were assigned. Another cause for failure was a lack of supervision in the initial training and/or employment periods. For these reasons, Texas established residential and day facilities for training, evaluating, and social adjustment, combining these with work experiences and special training facilities in large vocational schools.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Cooperative Programs (cont.)

Our programs of secondary-vocational education of handicapped students should be 'tooled' to achieve:

1. vocational reality in the students with special needs;

2. an educational vocational continuum - working from knowledge of the student's past and having information on those factors vital to his post-school adjustment;

3. the task differential between school and work - training the youngster to respond to life tasks; building in new tasks which will allow for easier transfer from school to work;

4. the preparation of students for adulthood, with the help of agencies whose primary service is vocational rehabilitation and assistance to the handicapped of post-school age;

5. an understanding of the many roles which teachers of the retarded must fill and to examine our teacher training programs in view of a teacher's role as counselor, coordinator, with a slightly different outlook.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NYSED) has worked cooperatively with the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services and several independent districts by providing Diagnostic Vocational Evaluations. These have been accomplished either at the Burke Rehabilitation Center in White Plains or under contract with the Association for Retarded Children. There is a need for more diagnostic services.

An objective of special education is to provide for the assimilation of special students into the "normal" population upon graduation from school. Attempts to determine the successes and failures and to re-direct educational programs have, generally, been lacking.

There are four (4) Area Centers for Occupational Education in Westchester which provide occupational programs for youth in "regular" high school classes. The energies of occupational education have been spent, in the main, on providing experiences for those students who show the greatest promise in the skilled trade areas. Some of the occupational problems of handicapped youth have been solved by involving them in area center programs; but the number is insignificant in contrast to the need.

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Community Agencies

We are fortunate to have many agencies available and anxious to provide needed services in Westchester County. Community agencies should play a significant role in any program designed to provide comprehensive services for the handicapped. There is, however, a clear need for communication and planning among those agencies with similar problems, goals, and services.

Employment Opportunities

There are many job opportunities available to the special education population in Westchester County, if adequate preparation is given. The following page shows the occupational clusters which were developed resulting from the analysis of employment opportunities in the county. The criteria used to establish job applicability are:

1. Are the skills required for this job "learnable" by the population?

2. Is there sufficient marketability for the skills once they have been developed?

3. Is this type of working experience acceptable by the individual, his family, and peers? (Can education toward its ultimate acceptance be effective?)

4. Will the need for the skill continue; and is there a high transferability in the skills taught?

The characteristics required of employees by employers are those required by any employer of any employee, such as good appearance; good personal habits; getting along with peers; being able to accept advice, criticism, and supervision; and responsibility for getting to work on time, being careful with property, and courtesy toward other personnel.

The number associated with the IQ of the individual is not as important as the efficiency with which the individual uses whatever abilities he has.

Characteristics of Model Educational Programs

The characteristics of model educational programs for this population imply that:

1. Children should be identified early in order to have as much of their school experience as possible contribute toward vocational and social adjustment.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDY

IDENTIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

HEALTH AND RELATED SERVICES

FILE CLERK - MEDICAL RECORDS
DIETARY AID
WARD AID
HOSPITAL MESSENGER
MAID (HOTEL AND MOTEL SERVICE)
PORTER (HOTEL AND MOTEL SERVICE)
LAUNDRY WORKER (MALE AND FEMALE)
STOREROOM MAN

MECHANICAL

SERVICE STATION ATTENDANT
MARINE SERVICES
SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
MACHINES PRACTICE

PRODUCTION

ELECTRICAL/ELECTRONIC ASSEMBLER
PACKAGING
MECHANICAL ASSEMBLY
TOY ASSEMBLY
INSPECTION OPERATOR (SIMPLE)
PUNCH PRESS OPERATOR
POLISHING OPERATOR

FOOD SERVICES

KITCHEN HELPER
STOREROOM MAN
DISHWASHING MACHINE OPERATOR
COUNTER MAN, COUNTER GIRL
BUS BOY
SHORT ORDER COOK
SECOND COOK
CAFETERIA WAITRESS

RETAIL AND MERCHANDISING

STOCKMAN
PLATFORM MAN
MARKER
SALES CLERK
CASHIER
SHIPPING CLERK

CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

BUILDING SERVICES & MAINTENANCE
DRY CLEANING
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE
HARD & SOFT FLOOR CARE

Characteristics of Model Educational Programs (cont.)

2. The school program should be well balanced with time devoted to the acquisition of academic skills, social skills, and vocational skills.

3. Community involvement should entail general recognition, by the community, of the value of the program and their encouragement of a total school commitment to it.

4. There should be early rehabilitation intervention through cooperative programs in which rehabilitation counselors, uniquely trained and skilled, provide the all-important counseling services.

5. Adequate time should be devoted, during the final years of schooling, for making direct contact with business and industry.

6. Regularly scheduled sessions to assess the effectiveness of staffing and administrative arrangements should be held to develop new ways of working, to alter direction, or to abandon practices if they are not of value. The program has to be sufficiently flexible if it is to serve the students for which it has been designed.

7. Special students, as all others, are entitled to appropriate diplomas (as distinguished from certificates of attendance), upon successful completion of a twelve-year program of studies.

8. The school is responsible for insuring that its handicapped graduates receive post-school services, which may be realized through referral to community resources. This implies close liaison between the school and local rehabilitation agencies of various types.

The exemplary programs, in summary, provided extensive diagnostic evaluation services; and when such services are involved, an enormous increase in educational effectiveness is made. All of the programs, which have been effective and successful, (of those visited by the study team) worked closely with the local vocational rehabilitation agency.

Factors Which Contribute to Creation of New Programs

There are many factors which contribute to the development of new and innovative educational techniques. Among the most significant are:

1. Availability of state and federal funds for special programs or for innovation;

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Factors Contributing to Creation of New Programs (cont.)

2. Concern and encouragement from community groups and influential individuals;

3. The influence of parents and parent groups;

4. The affect of national authorities, writers, and critics;

5. A willingness to entertain the notion of change on the part of educators at all levels of responsibility;

6. Concern and advice offered by the fields of business and industry, and the spectrum of employers and employment groups;

7. A dialogue between the school and the forces which shape its form and direction.

An attempt was made, by the study team, to identify innovators in the school districts where innovations were to be developed; and to provide them with the necessary philosophy, specifications, and justification.

Local Programs Presently in Planning or Operational Stages

Two new programs emerged in Westchester County in September 1968 which reflect the findings of the study:

The Board of Cooperative Educational Services, First Supervisory District (BOCES I), has instituted an occupational program for sixty (60) secondary youth in special classes. The project, known as Exploratory Occupational Education (EOE), is operated in conjunction with the Occupational Education program. The purpose is to acquaint youth in special classes with new occupational opportunities and to provide specific skills where indicated.

The Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Second Supervisory District (BOCES II), has developed a pre-occupational program for one hundred and ninety (190) secondary school students at the new Fairview Center in the Town of Greenburgh.

These two programs will serve as demonstration projects during the 1968-69 school year, showing a relevant direction in educational planning for youth in special classes.

BOCES II has also made application for the NIKE Missile Base Site for the development of a diagnostic center and occupational facilities. If approved, this would permit the development of improved programs for youth with special needs.

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SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PHASE I

Abstract - Special Needs Report

RECOMMENDATIONS - PHASE I

The program concepts described in "Project OPEN" should be examined. The establishment of "Project OPEN", RECOMMENDATION #1, would:

1. Provide the skills for transition from presently functioning programs to full time employment;

2. Provide occupational diagnostic services, occupational exploration, and specific training for youth in special classes in independent school districts;

3. Provide similar services for unemployed and unskilled adults in need of diagnostic and training services.

The development of a regional proposal to implement this recommendation is essential. The coordination of services required by the handicapped is necessary, since a separation of such services would fragment the structure and limit the effectiveness of the program.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

In light of the findings of the study, school districts are requested to evaluate the appropriateness of the occupational goals which have been set for handicapped secondary students. Steps should then be taken to evaluate the educational program so that experiences may be more relevant. Cooperative arrangements can be made between school districts or groups of districts to cut costs. Such arrangements could be implemented through the Office of the County Coordinator of Occupational Education.

The Director of the Study Team will be available to aid interested districts in the implementation of such plans.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

School districts should maintain close working relationships with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the New York State Employment Service (NYSES). The schools' responsibility is an awesome one, especially if advantage is not taken of the assistance of those agencies charged with providing essential community services. These agencies should make special budgetary proposals to increase the service to youth in school. Monies are made available for dropouts; more needs to be done for the potential dropout while he is still in school.

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Recommendations - Phase I (cont.)

RECOMMENDATION #4:

The Directors of Occupational Education and the Directors of Special Education, working together, could develop methods through which the existing programs can become more available to youth with special needs. Such a team and their staffs, clearly designated for such responsibility, could improve the level of occupational opportunities for youth in special education.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

The leaders in education should seek active cooperation with such community agencies as United Cerebral Palsy Association; Association for Retarded Children; Children's Association; Association for Brain Injured Children; the Council of Social Agencies; so that school administrators could function as the catalysts to develop desirable school-community activity and rapport.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

A great deal more attention needs to be given to the preparation and training of "special occupational educators" who possess the technique and experience so essential in the development of a good teacher-student relationship. This is basic to all teaching, but absolutely necessary in the teaching of special needs youngsters.

RECOMMENDATION #7:

The work-study coordinators in the eight special education programs should meet, via "Project OPEN", to discuss similar problems, techniques, obstacles, and successes. The NYSES and the DVR should be represented at such meetings to aid in attempts to improve educational and placement services.

RECOMMENDATION #8:

Adult education programs should be developed to involve the individual in an educational continuum, so that education is never terminal. To maintain the momentum of the concept in "Project OPEN", adequate post-school services to meet personal and educational needs should be provided to permit continuing growth and upgrading of occupational skills.

RECOMMENDATION #9:

Based on the findings of this study, the youth in secondary school programs in Westchester County today would be functioning at a

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Recommendations - Phase I

RECOMMENDATION #9:(cont.):

higher level if pre-school and elementary school diagnostic and treatment services were available. Programs which will deal with the early diagnosis and identification of learning disorders should, therefore, be expanded. The Directors of Special Education could aid in the development of guidelines and proposals.

RECOMMENDATION #10:

The "Regional Information Exchange for the Handicapped", submitted for approval under Title III, ESEA, should be established to provide a sound base for program planning; to utilize existing local services more widely; and to provide an avenue of mutual assistance among public and private education agencies and health and social agencies in the county.

RECOMMENDATION #11:

There is a critical shortage of sheltered employment facilities, particularly in Northern Westchester. Provision for sheltered and semi-sheltered employment should be expanded so that services can be offered which are closer to the clients being served.

ABSTRACT

of the

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

FINDINGS

PHASE II

ABSTRACT OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Enlightened citizens are aware that approximately one-fourth of our children and adults remain inadequately prepared to participate in either the responsibilities or benefits of a technological society. We have become familiar with such terms as "underprivileged", "deprived", and "disadvantaged".

Educators, statesmen, and industrial leaders have asserted, in view of the nation's growing affluence, that the state of affairs which has created this situation is unjust, needless and, as recent events demonstrate, hazardous. A tardy but massive national effort to correct these inadequacies and inequities is in progress.

"The term, disadvantaged, refers to a group of populations which differ from each other in a number of ways; but have in common such characteristics as low economic status, low social status, low educational achievement, tenuous or no employment, limited participation in community organizations, and limited ready potential for upward mobility." (Gordon, 1967)

Characteristics of the Disadvantaged

The characteristics of the disadvantaged, outlined by McCloskey, are worthy of examination:

A. Disadvantaged pupils have immense potential.

B. Poverty is an overriding condition of disadvantaged children.

C. Abnormally large percentages of disadvantaged pupils live in disorganized families.

D. In cities, disadvantaged children tend to reside in overcrowded slum neighborhoods.

E. Disadvantaged children have relatively impoverished self-concepts.

F. Generally, disadvantaged pupils learn less and their learning skills are poorly developed because capacities for self-direction are less developed.

G. Disadvantaged children have not developed sufficient cognitive and reasoning skills which is due partly to the prolonged restriction to the limited experiences of culturally and intellectually impoverished homes and neighborhoods.

Introduction (cont.)

Culturally Disadvantaged Children Need:

Improved skills in reading, arithmetic, and other academic areas;

Knowledge concerning living in the urban community;

Experiential backgrounds which will motivate learning;

Speech in conformity with patterns of standard English;

Heightened aspirations and motivation for the achievement of potential capacity and a willingness to initiate self-improvement;

Understanding and acceptance of the responsibilities of the prevailing urban culture;

Understanding of the purposes of education;

Teachers with understanding of pupils' background and problems;

Parents who are oriented positively toward education and the school;

A community which reinforces the positive influences of the school;

Physical examination and referral for remediation of defects;

Opportunities for achieving recognition, security, and a sense of belonging.

(U. S. Senate Subcommittee Hearings, 1965)

Some Facts about Poverty in Westchester County

Westchester County's image has always been one of affluence and, until recently, poverty was not considered one of its problems. The fact is that there is real poverty in Westchester. Poverty amid affluence makes the contrast more apparent; and so, the problems of unemployment, education, and housing are more severe.

Introduction (cont.)

Retardation and Disadvantagement - A Need for Clarification

Most frequently mentioned in the research literature is the problem created by the confusion resulting from an inability to differentiate between retardation and disadvantagement. No two researchers, in any field, use the same techniques or criteria in their investigations, which helps to explain why conclusions and results are contradictory.

It is impossible to say with accuracy what the ratio is between those who suffer from organic damage and those who do not; but there are probably nine poor, deprived people, who are not organically damaged, to one person who is. Studies, which include the Delaware Survey of 1963; the Onondaga County Study; the reports of the Eugenics program in North Carolina; and surveys of social characteristics and ethnic backgrounds of students in Special Education in Arkansas, New Jersey, Chicago, and Milwaukee, indicate that people of low socio-economic status are over-represented.

Throughout the nation, disadvantaged children appear in special education classes to a greater degree than population figures would warrant. The stigma of mental retardation, added to low status, places a child in a social and economic position which precludes advancement into the middle class. To be of low socio-economic status is to be in a disadvantageous position; but to be branded as mentally retarded is the coup de grace to the spirit of the poor child.

The diagnostic results, which serve to label the child, are seldom used to help generate a realistic educational program. Preconceptions from labeling set up for the teacher a much too rigid guideline, from which deviation for the better is difficult from the very beginning.

Equal Education Opportunity

The phrase "equal educational opportunity" has engendered much discussion. It is necessary to determine the extent of an individual's potential in order to know what kind of "opportunity" will be most beneficial. Opportunity needs to be commensurate with potential, otherwise failure and frustration result. This is not to say that failure is to be totally avoided; but it is to say that the experiences provided should not develop a failure-prone individual.

Success is an essential ingredient as the human being develops. Successful experiences can best be provided when opportunities are given which are within the grasp of the individual.

Introduction (cont.)

Evaluation Methods Are Urgently Needed

As a corollary to the need for successful experiences is the need for adequate evaluation methods which will prevent cultural differences and lack of environmental stimuli from producing invalid measurement. Research substantiates that far too much has been determined about the individual from the way he functions, rather than from adequate methods of assessment of potential which would help to direct an educational plan for him.

Hunt (1961) has provided considerable support for the position that intelligence is not primarily a genetically determined phenomenon, but is a function which develops in and through the process of interaction with the environment.

There is need for tools which will increase our ability to assess more equitably the learning potential of disadvantaged youth; and there is hope in two outstanding pioneering efforts which are now being made.

The Quest for Relevance and Respectability

The quest for relevance and respectability begins, for the student, usually on the high school level where there are,basically, two curricular areas:

1. the academic or "college bound", which is high in respectability, but low in relevance for a large percentage of the population;

2. the general or "non-college bound", which is moderately high in relevance, but low in respectability.

Although courses in occupational education, industrial arts, business education, and home economics are high in relevance, they lack the respectability associated with the academic areas of the school curriculum. This, of course, is not a simple matter with which to contend, stemming as it does from an age-old tradition which is academically oriented. Our high schools as college preparatory institutions represent an important function of our educational system; but it need not preclude meeting the needs of other students. Federal programs are focusing attention on the practical needs of youth; and the research being developed by such programs can aid in the development of more relevant programs.

The following, from Childhood Education Magazine, dramatizes the frustrations of a youth in search of meaning in his school experience:

Quest for Relevance (cont.)

POOR SCHOLAR'S SOLILOQUY

No, I'm not very good in school....Seems like teachers don't think you know anything unless you can name the book it comes out of. I've got a lot of books at home - - like Popular Science and Mechanical Encyclopedia - - but I don't sit and read them thru like they make us do in school. I use my books when I want to find something out. In school, tho, we've got to learn whatever is in the book and I just can't memorize the stuff....

This year I've been trying to learn about trucks because my uncle owns three. I know the horsepower and number of forward and backward speeds of 26 American trucks, some of them Diesels, and I can spot each make a long way off. I started to tell my teacher about how a Diesel works in science class, when the pump we were using to make a vacuum in a bell jar got hot; but she said she didn't see what a Diesel engine had to do with our experiment on air pressure, so I kept still. The kids seemed interested, tho.

I'm not very good in geography, either. They call it economic geography this year. We've been studying the imports and exports of Chile all week, but I couldn't tell you what they are. I had to miss school yesterday because my uncle took me and his big trailer truck down state about 200 miles, and we brought 10 tons of stock to the Chicago market.

He told me where we were going and I had to figure out the highways to take and also the mileage. He didn't do anything but drive and turn where I told him to. Was that fun! I sat with the map on my lap and told him to turn south, or southeast, or some other direction. I'm figuring how much the oil cost, and also the wear and tear on the truck - - he calls it depreciation - - so we'll know how much we made.

I even write out all the bills and send letters to the farmers about what their livestock brought at the stockyards. I only made three mistakes in 17 letters last time, my aunt said, all commas. I wish I could write school themes that way. The last one I had to write was, "What a Daffodil Thinks of Spring". and I just couldn't get going....

Even in shop, I don't get very good grades. I wanted to make an end gate for my uncle's trailer, but the shop teacher said that meant using metal and wood both, and I'd have to learn to work with wood first. I made a tie rack at school and the tail gate after school at the garage. My uncle said I saved him $10.00.

"Poor Scholar's Soliloquy" (cont.)

Civics is hard for me, too. I've been trying to learn the "Articles of Confederation" for almost a week, because the teacher said we couldn't be good citizens unless we did. I really tried, because I want to be a good citizen; I did hate to stay after school, tho, because a bunch of us boys have been cleaning up an old lot to make a playground for the little kids from the Methodist home. We raised enough money collecting scrap to build a wire fence clear around the lot.

Dad says I can quit school when I am 15, and I am sort of anxious to because there are a lot of things I want to learn how to do.

* * * * *

....and the students are not alone in their search for meaning. The following, from an anonymous educator, demonstrates his feelings of concern and inadequacy:

I TAUGHT THEM ALL

I have taught for ten years. During that time, I have given assignments, among others, to a murderer, an evangelist, a pugilist, a thief, and an imbecile.

The murderer was a quiet little boy who sat on the front seat and regarded me with pale blue eyes; the evangelist, easily the most popular boy in the school, had the lead in the junior play; the pugilist lounged by the window and let loose at intervals with a raucous laugh that startled even the geraniums; the thief was a gay-hearted Lothario with a song on his lips; and the imbecile, a soft-eyed little animal seeking the shadows.

The murderer awaits death in the state penitentiary; the evangelist has lain a year now in the village churchyard; the pugilist lost an eye in a brawl in Hong Kong; the thief, by standing on tiptoe, can see the windows of my room from the county jail; and the once gentle-eyed moron beats his head against a padded cell in the state asylum.

All these pupils once sat in my room, sat and looked at me grimly across worn brown desks. I have been a great help to these pupils - - I taught them the dates of battles, the boundaries of states, and how to find square roots by the algebraic method.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Findings - Phase II (cont.)

Educational Programs Presently Available

Where there has been vision and comprehensive planning, as well as community and financial support, the unique needs of disadvantaged youth are met. Several programs are worthy of note for their effort in dealing with problems of disadvantagement and school alienation. To the degree that such goals are accomplished, as these young people progress through their school experiences, there will be little need to create special programs at the high school level.

The work-study program at the John Jay High School is considered a good one in serving the needs of all youth, disadvantaged or otherwise.

The White Plains Public Schools' Racial Balance Plan provides for racial integration and aims to increase educational opportunity.

Project GROW (Guidance, Remediation, Occupational Orientation, and Work Experience) is a demonstration project for students who have been identified as potential dropouts. Conducted by BOCES II, Project GROW was developed as a result of the STEP Program (School to Employment Program). This is a leadership project designed to provide occupational orientation, remediation, and developmental assistance to mathematics and communication skills. A purpose of Project GROW is to "provide guidelines for participating school districts in developing curricula, techniques, and climates which will combat failure, disillusionment, and despair". Much has been learned from this project.

The "Non-Academic" Curriculum Experiment at th astchester High School is attempting to increase the relevance of school by offering a completely new curriculum for youth with special needs. A team of nine staff members meets daily to discuss the individual needs of students. Its emphasis is on practical applications of English and Social Studies, through an occupationally oriented approach.

The Rochambeau School in White Plains offers an educational program which is unique in the county and, in fact, in the entire state. The school, which is the Adult Education Center for the city school district of White Plains, houses a variety of educational programs. Most applicable to this study are the programs in Basic Education for Adults and Manpower Development Training. The staff of the Rochambeau school works closely with the community to provide comprehensive personal services which

Educational Programs Presently Available (cont.)

are essential, both prior to and during the basic education and Manpower Training programs.

The "learning center" at Rochambeau School has received wide acclaim for its successes in handling the reading problems of the disadvantaged.

The aforementioned programs represent a few of many attempts under way to aid in providing increased educational opportunity for the disadvantaged. Where they do meet the needs of their students, no special programs are necessary; but many more need to make such a commitment.

The Occupational Picture for the Disadvantaged

At the writing of this report, there are over 7,000 jobs going begging in the skilled and semi-skilled categories in Westchester County. Employment is available for virtually all those who possess the required skills. In many instances, employers have hired unskilled and underprepared individuals and have provided the training go give the required skills and work orientation.

The solution is an obvious one. Education, job training, and counseling are needed to provide marketable skills. The individuals involved must be willing to learn the skills and must be motivated to apply themselves to the task of education and self-improvement. This is a responsibility which the school cannot accept as its sole obligation. There is need for strong community involvement in this.

Other Problem Areas

Poor housing and welfare payments, as they are now allotted, do not build pride or confidence in one's self or one's ability to improve. To the degree that the welfare system removes incentive and motivation for growth, it should be altered in one of the ways which our economists have suggested.

Characteristics of Model Educational Programs

Since many of the model programs are relatively new and sufficient data has not yet been accumulated to make a valid evaluation, much of any discussion is admittedly judgmental. With this limitation in mind, the following similarities were found:

Findings - Phase II (cont.)

Characteristics of Model Programs (cont.)

The educational program is sensitive: Model programs care about the individual and his problems. The educational experience is satisfying and rewarding; there is, clearly, understanding and empathy. No one is ever "too busy".

The total program is relevant: There is meaning in what is learned. Information taught is readily useful and applicable to real problems or established goals. There is maximum "life task" orientation and minimum "school-task" orientation.

Resources are available in abundance: The learning environment is stimulating. Effective resources are utilized continuously. Field trips, knowledgeable visitors, relevant materials, and audio-visual aids and classroom innovations are the rule, rather than the exception.

The student is expected to learn: The self-fulfilling prophecy is "not fulfilled" in model programs. The level of achievement of each learner is determined, not assumed. An individual assessment is developed by the instructional, clinical, counseling, and supportive staffs to aid in effective individual program planning. There is an expectation of growth and learning due to services patiently concentrated on each individual; thus, growth is almost certain to result.

Ability is not a significant factor in grouping for instruction: Students in model programs are grouped by similarity of goals or needs. Students, who are consistently tardy, may be grouped together for one instructional purpose; others may be grouped because of reading difficulties which are similar. Individual need was the most frequently used criterion for grouping.

The teacher is a crucial person: The gifted, highly motivated teacher can overcome inordinate obstacles in the education of youth. There is little which can substitute for such a teacher. Uncertified teachers, with long experience in the subject field, were sometimes more effective than others who had considerably more formal preparation.

Special funding is usually involved: Although model programs are more expensive, the ultimate value of the investment (measured in successful graduates) more than justifies the additional cost. Most of the programs examined were employment-oriented, with primary emphasis on attitude and skill development.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Findings - Phase II (cont.)

Model Programs (cont.)

Attention is given to the total spectrum of human needs: It is difficult for an individual to isolate himself from a personal or family crisis for seven hours a day, while he is in school. Model programs recognize that serious problems inhibit learning. Efforts are made to coordinate services in the following areas of personal and family needs: medical, dental, welfare, recreation, social assistance, and proper diet. As a result of close working relationships with all community agencies to find solutions, there is a manifestation of "caring".

The development of self-respect and a feeling of personal worth: Success is an important factor. Students are exposed to as many successful experiences as possible and are even "spoon-fed", in some instances. The staff recognizes that the task with which a student is involved may not be as significant as the reward he achieves. There is constant reinforcement of positive behavior patterns.

The administrator cares: In each of these programs, one finds a dynamic, determined, and competent principal or director who inspires everyone to join in a successful venture. He is dedicated and determined that his ideas will work. He is an educational leader who works far beyond school closing time and expects his teachers to do the same.

There is a "break" from tradition: There is receptivity to constructive innovation. Planned educational change is expected.

The following characteristics are also found in model programs:

There is dialogue among all those involved.

There is a strong and sensitive guidance orientation.

Evaluation is continuous; and corrective "feedback" is constant.

Class size is small; fifteen (15) is maximum.

Rules are functional, otherwise they are not instituted.

Flexibility is a by-word.

Students help each other.

Advisory groups are actively involved in program development and in the dissemination of information.

ABSTRACT

of the

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PHASE II

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PHASE II

CONCLUSIONS

In a land where compulsory education for all has become the keystone, one of the most perplexing problems facing American education is the "disadvantaged" child. It would, indeed, be naive of anyone to submit that all of the answers are known, when, in fact, there is not even consensus on all of the questions.

The potential of disadvantaged youth will be released when an educational program is developed which provides for the broad spectrum of human needs. In looking at the needs of the individual, we find, with few exceptions, that he must tailor himself to the organization if he is to succeed. If success is the goal, then success, not failure, must be demonstrated in a program predicated upon a progression of successes.

The term "underdeveloped" is not inappropriate in describing the disadvantaged. It should bring to mind countries rich in untapped resources; and the need for means of releasing and utilizing them. "Underdeveloped" implies possibilities which have evaded the nurture of educational systems. The task of the school must be to lead the way in creating and designing those opportunities, avenues, and channels through which untapped resources may be brought to usefulness.

RECOMMENDATION #1

A Task Force on Educational Opportunity should be formed in each school district, made up of concerned members of the community and school personnel to explore educational problems. A willingness to yield to reasonable and legitimate requests ia a prerequisite on the part of school personnel.

Chief school administrators should consider establishing an "Office of Community Relations" in each district, oriented toward bridging the communications gap between school and community which is apparent in all parts of our country.

RECOMMENDATION #2

The diagnostic services of "Project OPEN" should be provided to aid in differentiating between disadvantagement and organic retardation. Such an assessment program, established on a regional basis, will permit increased understanding of students' potential and of the appropriate educational and occupational solutions for their needs. Prerequisite to effective educational planning is the use of the best diagnostic techniques presently available; and the addition of those which will be developed and prove to be useful.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Recommendations - Phase II (cont.)

RECOMMENDATION #3

The occupational education opportunities in the Area Center programs should be brought to the attention of more high school students. In order to accomplish this, a large part of the high school curriculum should be "occupationalized". Departments such as Home Economics, Industrial Arts, and Business Education should relate subject matter more specifically to occupational needs. Industrial Arts, for example, should serve, basically, three purposes:

1. to provide for the "discovery of technology" (tools, materials, and processes) as a part of the student's general education;

2. to provide for the technical orientation of pre-technical and pre-engineering students; (This course would be geared to the 2- or 4-year college student.)

3. to help pre-occupational skills and attitudes to be developed in those students who need marketable skills upon graduation from high school.

Number '3' above is particularly applicable to the findings of this study. It is, therefore, recommended that proposals be developed to permit instructional and counseling personnel from the Area Occupational Education Centers to work closely with the Industrial Arts staffs in district high schools to:

1. aid the counselors, the instructors, and the students in understanding occupational needs, and in developing pre-occupational skills prior to student involvement in the Area Center programs;

2. aid in the identification of students who can benefit from the offerings available at the Area Centers;

3. permit the Area Centers to play a more effective role as extensions of the high school, rather than programs in competition with the high school.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Recommendations - Phase II (cont.)

RECOMMENDATION #3 (cont.)

Studies, similar to the pilot study conducted by Dr. Bruce Tuckman at the Woodlands High School, are suggested to determine how the staff and the students perceive the programs offered at the Area Occupational Education Centers. Directors of occupational education are encouraged to analyze these findings and to work with district high school administrators to develop effective articulation between the two areas.

RECOMMENDATION #4

School districts should have training programs in human relations for all staff members. The programs should focus on developing a better understanding of the student-teacher relationship with particular emphasis on techniques for modifying student behavior. Regional planning for the implementation of this recommendation is suggested.

The Special Needs Study recommends the continuation and expansion of the concept of the "Five Urban Systems Staff Development Center". The need for the expansion of such services is reinforced by the findings of this study. Information obtained from the staff of a new center should be made available to the entire county, with particular emphasis on continuous communication with the educational communities of Ossining and Peekskill.

RECOMMENDATION #5

A Career Information Center should be established for the county. The purposes of such a center would be:

1. to have immediately retrievable information on occupational needs, trends, and employment opportunities county-wide;

2. to provide career counseling for youth and adults with special needs;

3. to aid school personnel in knowing what the employment needs and opportunities in the county are, which would assist in educational planning.

The New York State Employment Service should be actively involved in such a center.

Abstract - Special Needs Report

Recommendations - Phase II (cont.)

RECOMMENDATION #6

Evaluation reports on the successes and failures of existing programs (for the disadvantaged) should be compiled and made available to other districts, so there may be mutual benefit from such experiences. Such information should be centrally located for easily obtainable reference; and/or circulated to those for whom it will have application.

RECOMMENDATION #7

"Tracking" students, using "ability" as the criterion, is questionable, if one wants to attain equality of educational opportunity. An increase in heterogeneous grouping is recommended, if a form of team teaching is used, with supportive services, which will then provide the capability of dealing with individual differences.

In order to deal effectively with the diversity created by non-grouping techniques, instructional strategies will need to be developed through new uses of instructional team members, audio-visual media, and programmed instruction. These represent an abundance of instructional possibilities.

RECOMMENDATION #8

Pre-school diagnostic services, outlined in Phase I, should be expanded so that learning disorders may be identified early and appropriate steps taken to assure maximum benefit from school experiences. It is recommended that these services be provided in cooperation with existing community agencies.

RECOMMENDATION #9

The characteristics of model educational programs, outlined in foregoing pages, should be given consideration with a view to their application in future educational planning.

Any of the recommendations, suggested as a county-wide or regional undertaking, could be implemented through the Office of the County Coordinator of Occupational Education.

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One of the difficult aspects of a study of this type is the communication of precise information. The Director of the Study Team will be available to discuss the findings of the report; and to aid in the local application of the recommendations.

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for

PHASE I and PHASE II

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NOTES

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